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ABSTRACT

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) works with 10 American-affiliated Pacific entities: American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Yap), Guam, Hawaii, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. The survey raises awareness of the risk factors affecting educators in the Pacific entities and provides insight necessary to redress the concerns of students, policymakers, and educators around the region. The study identified risk factors affecting educators in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. These risk factors might also play a role in teachers' and school administrators' absenteeism, attrition, and stress burnout. In the Marshall Islands, 74 teacher and 18 administrator surveys were returned. Absenteeism among teachers and administrators appears to be a problem. Teachers cite funerals, personal illness, and training leave, and administrators cite educational leave, meetings, and workshops as reasons for their absenteeism. Twenty-seven percent of teachers plan to leave within 2 years, citing low salaries, stress, and lack of support from school administration and central offices as reasons. Administrators cite stress, students' bad attitudes, lack of supplies and materials, and retirement. Appendixes contain teacher and administrator questionnaires. (Contains 17 references.) (DFR)

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# RETENTION AND ATTRITION OF PACIFIC SCHOOL TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS (RAPSTA) STUDY

## Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)

Research and Development Cadre

November 1999

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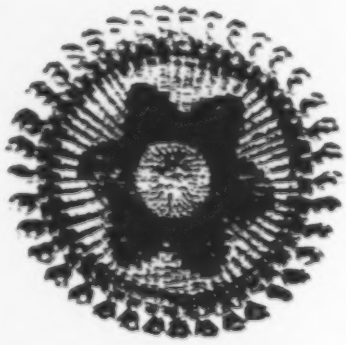

PACIFIC RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

EA 030 435

RESEARCH SERIES

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# Retention and Attrition of Pacific School Teachers and Administrators (RAPSTA) Study

## Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)

**Research and Development Cadre**

November 1999

**PACIFIC RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING**
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## Preface

This study represents one step towards solving problems that plague many schools throughout the Pacific: high rates of absenteeism, attrition, and stress/burnout among teachers and school administrators. The data collected in this study reveal the extent of these problems and shed some light on possible contributing factors.

During coming months, R&D Cadre members will present this report to teachers and school administrators in each Pacific entity, soliciting feedback and suggestions that we anticipate will lead to the formulation of specific, entity-based solutions to these concerns.

# I. Introduction

The mission of Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) is to *assist education, government, community agencies, businesses, and labor groups to maintain cultural literacy and improve the quality of life by helping to strengthen educational programs and processes for children, youth, and adults* (Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, 1996).

In order to carry out this mission, PREL has made a commitment to work in close partnership with the ten American-affiliated Pacific entities: American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia (Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, Yap), Guam, Hawai'i, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau. As a result of their very different forms of political affiliation with the United States, these ten states are referred to as *entities* in PREL's terminology.

As part of this work, PREL's Research and Development (R&D) Cadre has undertaken several studies in order to describe the educational experiences and opportunities of Pacific Islanders. The R&D Cadre is a group of Pacific educators consisting of one member from each department or ministry of education in the ten entities comprising PREL's service region, and one member representing the National Department of Education, Federated States of Micronesia.

Each entity has formed a local support team of researchers who assist the cadre member in carrying out research studies. The local R&D support teams range in size from five to thirteen members.

One of the studies conducted, *A Study of Risk Factors Among High School Students in the Pacific Region* (Pacific Region Educational Laboratory R&D Cadre, 1995), sparked interest in examining risk factors associated with adults working in Pacific schools. Open-ended questions answered by students participating in the 1995 study indicated that these students were concerned about teacher absenteeism. In entities where no substitute teacher pool is available, students' educational opportunities may be seriously compromised due to high rates of teacher absenteeism.

Frequent teacher absenteeism in the Pacific may have a strong impact on student achievement. For various reasons, such as lack of funds or human resources, substitute-teacher programs are lacking in many entities. Students might come to school, but a teacher might not be available to teach them. Not only does this affect access to educational opportunities and contribute to low student achievement, it could also have an effect on attendance counts, which can adversely affect school funding, thus perpetuating a negative cycle.

Factors related to teacher and school administrator absenteeism have been identified in the research literature. However, research on this topic is lacking for the Pacific region. As a result, the PREL Board of Directors recommended follow-up research detailing risk factors for teachers and school administrators. This recommendation was supported by the R&D Cadre members, who expressed interest in examining these risk factors within their respective entities. In addition, policy makers and program managers in the ten entities have expressed concern about the impact of teacher and administrator absenteeism, as well as attrition and stress/burnout, on student achievement.

In response to these concerns, a study was designed to describe the factors that affect Pacific Island educators and make them "at risk" for absenteeism, attrition, and stress/burnout. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (1997) defines stress as "a physical, chemical, or emotional factor that causes bodily and mental tension." Research indicates that excessive stress might cause illness. The study might provide data to formulate a futher definition of stress as it applies to teachers, specifically those in the Pacific.

A condition termed "burnout" (DeRobbio, 1995) could also result from difficult and stressful work conditions. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines this condition as "exhaustion of physical or emotional strength."

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1) What are the risk factors that affect Pacific school teachers and administrators?

2) What risk factors lead to absenteeism, attrition, and stress/burnout?

Of particular interest to the Republic of the Marshall Islands Ministry of Education is the possible relationship between students' academic achievement and the absenteeism, attrition, and stress/burnout rates among teachers and school administrators. Student achievement in the Republic of the Marshall Islands has declined over the years. This decline is evident through the low scores achieved on the Public High School Entrance Test. Annually, students in Grade 8 are tested, and only 33 percent of them can be accepted into the public high schools. Their test results have potentially negative implications for teachers and school administrators in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. For this reason, the Republic of the Marshall Islands was interested in participating in the study.

This study was designed to identify risk factors affecting educators in the Republic of the Marshall Islands and other Pacific entities served by PREL. As part of the process, a literature review of teacher risk factors was performed and published (Hammond & Onikama, 1997). This review concluded that:

1) Factors associated with teacher absenteeism–such as child care, transportation difficulties, illness, and cultural demands–tend to be immediate obligations or concerns (Scott & Wimbush, 1991).

2) Factors associated with attrition–such as low salaries, poor benefits, and work overload–are chronic or habitual concerns (Wari, 1993).

3) Factors associated with stress/burnout–such as student misbehavior (Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Pelletier, 1977; American Psychiatric Association, 1994); anger, anxiety, or depression (DeRobbio & Iwanicki, 1996); and school reform (Farber & Ascher, 1992)–are daily nuisances.

These risk factors might also play a role in teacher and school administrator absenteeism, attrition, and stress/burnout in the Pacific region with its unique educational, cultural, and geographical contexts. Pacific schools have adopted the American system of education. However, this transplanted system exists parallel to a Pacific orientation and heritage influenced by Polynesian and Micronesian traditional values, cultural events, and environmental circumstances. Some examples include the following, which were taken from a review of the literature and interviews with Pacific educators:

Cultural events. In some island communities, traditional feasts and funerals are important parts of village life. For instance, if a feast falls on a school day, it is likely that the teacher (who may hold a traditional title) will not go to school, but will prepare for the event. Family relationships with their attendant obligations are highly valued and honored among Pacific Islanders and may account for higher absenteeism rates among Pacific educators.

Family and village social roles. In many island communities, family and village relationships provide a social context that may overlook frequent absenteeism. For example, a teacher may be a member of a large and influential family, many of whom may be employed in the public school system. That teacher's absenteeism may, therefore, be overlooked. Although the traditional American ethic views such favoritism as inappropriate, it may be tolerated within the context of many Pacific lifestyles.

Culturally sanctioned time off. Culturally sanctioned time off may be granted to some people in some entities. For example, a condition referred to as "Monday sickness," occurs when male teachers, especially those who are young and single, are absent from school after a weekend of excess. Their absence is tolerated as a social and developmental pattern related to their youth.

Environmental factors. Unique weather patterns such as hurricanes and "super-typhoons" in the Pacific region may have an effect on absenteeism. Typhoon Paka, for example, recently decimated Guam, leaving it without electricity and forcing the closure of schools. In Hawai'i, giant winter swells may close roadways and limit access to schools. Flooding in low-lying islands and atolls can cause many teachers to miss school for one or more days.

The main purpose of this study was to raise awareness of risk factors affecting educators in the Pacific entities and to provide insight necessary to address the concerns of students, policy makers, and educators throughout the region. Hopefully, the results will stimulate interest and follow-up action as it relates to local professional development opportunities for Pacific educators.

Because of the region's remote geographical location and its distance from educator training programs, as well as the high costs associated with traveling to institutions of higher education, local departments of education must share responsibility for the development of programs or interventions geared towards maintaining the educational work force. Preventing the negative outcomes associated with risk factors can help educators to become more effective while working with their students and thus promote positive student outcomes. The study will also contribute to the fund of knowledge on absenteeism, attrition, and stress/burnout among educators generally, and Pacific educators specifically, thereby contributing to cross-cultural theory building. This, in turn, may assist the development of models and tools for promoting retention and reducing attrition and stress/burnout among educators in the Pacific and elsewhere.

## II. Methods

The *Retention and Attrition of Pacific School Teachers and Administrators* (RAPSTA) study was conducted in ten U.S.-affiliated Pacific entities during the spring of 1997. It was designed and conducted by PREL's R&D Cadre and its members' local support teams. PREL staff provided technical assistance.

R&D Cadre members participated in three PREL-sponsored seminars in which they designed the study, developed data collection instruments, and analyzed the data. Cadre members then shared the collected information with their local R&D support teams.

### Subjects

The unit of analysis for the RAPSTA study is the elementary and secondary-level teacher and school administrator. In the Republic of the Marshall Islands, an indeterminate number of teacher surveys were distributed, and 74 completed surveys were returned. Similarly, an indeterminate number of school administrator surveys were distributed, and 18 completed surveys were returned. It was not possible to calculate the return rates for either survey. However, the 74 teachers represent 16 percent of the total public school teacher workforce. The 18 school administrators represent approximately 25 percent of all public school principals. Tables 1 and 2 summarize demographic characteristics of the subjects.

*Table 1*

**Characteristics of RAPSTA Teacher Sample from the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

| Demographic Characteristics | | Number | Percentage* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Female | 18 | 24.3 |
| | Male | 49 | 66.2 |
| | No Response | 7 | 9.5 |
| | **TOTAL** | **74** | **100.0** |
| **Ethnicity** | Chuukese | 1 | 1.4 |
| | Fijian | 2 | 2.7 |
| | Marshallese | 43 | 58.1 |
| | Mixed | 5 | 6.8 |
| | No Response | 23 | 31.1 |
| | **TOTAL** | **74** | **100.0** |
| **Age** | 20-29 | 13 | 17.6 |
| | 30-39 | 19 | 25.7 |
| | 40-49 | 26 | 35.1 |
| | 50+ | 11 | 14.9 |
| | No Response | 5 | 6.8 |
| | **TOTAL** | **74** | **100.0** |
| **Marital Status** | Never Married | 13 | 17.6 |
| | Married | 50 | 67.6 |
| | Separated | 1 | 1.4 |
| | Divorced | 2 | 2.7 |
| | Widowed | 1 | 1.4 |
| | No Response | 7 | 9.5 |
| | **TOTAL** | **74** | **100.0** |
| **Education** | HS Graduate | 34 | 45.9 |
| | Associate Degree | 29 | 39.2 |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Master's Degree | 1 | 1.4 |
| | Others | 3 | 4.1 |
| | No Response | 7 | 9.5 |
| | **TOTAL** | **74** | **100.0** |
| **Experience** | 1 - 4 Years | 17 | 23.0 |
| | 5 - 10 Years | 14 | 18.9 |
| | 11 - 14 Years | 14 | 18.9 |
| | 15 - 20 Years | 4 | 5.4 |
| | 20+ Years | 15 | 20.2 |
| | No Response | 10 | 13.5 |
| | **TOTAL** | **74** | **100.0** |
| **Salary** | <5,000 | 12 | 16.2 |
| | 5,000 - 5,999 | 10 | 13.5 |
| | 6,000 - 6,999 | 10 | 13.5 |
| | 7,000 - 7,999 | 7 | 9.5 |
| | 8,000 - 8,999 | 9 | 12.2 |
| | 9,000+ | 16 | 21.6 |
| | No Response | 10 | 13.5 |
| | **TOTAL** | **74** | **100.0** |

*Percentages might not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.

The majority of teachers are married Marshallese males, between the ages of 30 and 49 years, with a high school diploma (45.9%) or associate (39.2%) degree and less than 15 years of experience.

*Table 2*

**Characteristics of RAPSTA School Administrator Sample from the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

| Demographic Characteristics | | Number | Percentage* |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Female | 5 | 27.8 |
| | Male | 9 | 50.0 |
| | No Response | 4 | 22.2 |
| | **TOTAL** | **18** | **100.0** |
| **Ethnicity** | Marshallese | 13 | 72.2 |
| | Pohnpeian | 1 | 5.6 |
| | No Response | 4 | 22.2 |
| | **TOTAL** | **18** | **100.0** |
| **Age** | 30-34 | 2 | 11.1 |
| | 40-44 | 4 | 22.2 |
| | 45-49 | 6 | 33.3 |
| | 50+ | 6 | 33.3 |
| | No Response | 0 | 0.0 |
| | **TOTAL** | **18** | **100.0** |
| **Marital Status** | Never Married | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Married | 18 | 100.0 |
| | Separated | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Divorced | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Widowed | 0 | 0.0 |
| | No Response | 0 | 0.0 |
| | **TOTAL** | **18** | **100.0** |
| **Education** | HS Graduate | 3 | 16.7 |
| | Associate Degree | 9 | 50.0 |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 5 | 27.8 |
| | Master's Degree | 0 | 0.0 |
| | Advanced Degree | 0 | 0.0 |
| | No Response | 1 | 5.6 |
| | **TOTAL** | **18** | **100.0** |
| **Experience** | 1 - 4 Years | 2 | 11.1 |
| | 5 - 10 Years | 1 | 5.6 |
| | 11 - 14 Years | 0 | 0.0 |
| | 15 - 20 Years | 4 | 22.2 |
| | 20+ Years | 11 | 61.1 |
| | No Response | 0 | 0.0 |
| | **TOTAL** | **18** | **100.0** |
| **Salary** | <5,000 | 3 | 16.7 |
| | 5,000 - 5,999 | 1 | 5.6 |
| | 6,000 - 6,999 | 2 | 11.1 |
| | 7,000 - 7,999 | 1 | 5.6 |
| | 8,000 - 8,999 | 4 | 22.2 |
| | 9,000+ | 6 | 33.3 |
| | No Response | 1 | 5.6 |
| | **TOTAL** | **18** | **100.0** |

*Percentages might not sum to exactly 100 due to rounding.

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Most of the school administrators are married Marshallese males, over the age of 45, with an associate (47.4%) or bachelor's (26.3%) degree and more than 15 years of experience.

### Sampling

The Republic of the Marshall Islands has 76 public schools, which are spread out over 29 atolls and 5 small islands that cover a total land area of 70 square miles and that are dispersed across 750,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean. The majority of the Marshallese populace resides on Majuro and Kwajalein atolls, where 73 percent of the school-age population attends schools (Embassy of the Republic of the Marshall Islands of the United States, 1999). Sampling for this study focused on teachers and school administrators from the 12 public schools that serve these two atolls.

### Instrumentation

Two similar data collection instruments were developed, one for teachers and another for school administrators (see Appendices). Each is a five-page survey with three sections: Section 1 consists of 2-1/2 pages of forced-choice and short-answer, self-reported background information as well as absenteeism data for the school year in which the survey was administered. Section 2 is a single-page rating sheet outlining stress/burnout feelings; it was adapted from the Maslach Burnout Inventory–Educators Survey and Human Services Survey (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996). Section 3 is also a single-page rating sheet detailing reasons why an educator might quit teaching or working as a school administrator. Individuals did not identify themselves by name, and all responses were kept confidential.

*Section 1 - Demographic Characteristics and Absenteeism Data*

Section 1 gathered relevant personal information to be used in examining teacher/school administrator retention and attrition. Questions asked about gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, educational attainment, salary, experience, and current teaching load. Additional data on the number of instructional days away from school during the 1996-1997 school year (SY) and the reasons for those absences were collected. For example, participants were asked to write down the number of days they were away from school in SY 1996-1997 for reasons such as funerals, birthdays, storms, heavy rains, or floods.

*Section 2 - Stress and Burnout Ratings*

The purpose of Section 2, as a means of measuring employee stress/burnout, was to discover how respondents view their jobs and the people with whom they work closely, as a means of measuring employee stress/burnout. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is recognized as the leading measure of burnout. "It is the best known and most widely used questionnaire for the assessment of individual occupational burnout among human service workers and others whose work involves intense interaction with people" (Offerman, 1986, p. 419). The MBI is a 22-item, self-report inventory of three subscales, which were developed to measure dimensions that the authors felt best defined burnout. These subscales include Low Personal Accomplishment (8 items), Emotional Exhaustion (9 items), and Depersonalization (5 items).

- Low Personal Accomplishment results when teachers evaluate themselves negatively, particularly in relation to their work with students (DeRobbio, 1995). Those who report low personal accomplishment may disagree with the statement, "I have accomplished many worthwhile things in teaching" (Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1986, p. 2).

- Emotional Exhaustion "is the tired and fatigued feeling that develops as emotional energies are drained. When these feelings become chronic, educators find they can no longer give of themselves to students as they once could" (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996, p. 28). They may agree with the statement, "I feel I'm working too hard on my job" (Maslach & Jackson, 1986, p. 2).

- Depersonalization results when educators "no longer have positive feelings about their students" (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996, p. 28). They may develop negative or cynical attitudes and feelings about them and may agree with the statement, "I don't really care what happens to some of my students" (Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1986, p. 2).

Respondents rated each of the 22 items in terms of the frequency that these feelings occur, ranging from "never" (0) to "every day" (6).

To make the survey instrument more appropriate to the Pacific region, the MBI Educators Survey (Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1986) and the MBI Human Services Survey (Maslach & Jackson, 1986) were adapted, with permission from the publisher. Seven of the 22 items were modified to clarify vocabulary and idiomatic phrases. Since many of the respondents in the Pacific entities speak English as a second or foreign language, words such as "exhilarated" and "callous," or expressions such as "at the end of my rope" were stated in more understandable terms. These modifications were made by two Pacific-entity educators who are familiar with the English proficiency of teachers in the region. It was determined that these language-clarifying changes would not significantly alter the instrument's technical qualities. The MBI has been validated for use in countries around the world in a number of translations (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996, p. 1).

*Section 3 - Reasons for Leaving the Profession*

The purpose of Section 3 was to understand why teachers and school administrators leave their jobs. Respondents were asked to rate each of 19 statements on a four-point Likert-type scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." For example, teachers rated their level of agreement with two statements: "I might leave my current teaching job for a better teaching position within the next two years" and "I might leave teaching altogether within the next two years." They were also asked to rate their agreement by noting reasons why they might quit teaching. Reasons for leaving the profession, as listed on the survey, were selected because of their prevalence in attrition literature. Additional reasons were included on the basis of their perceived importance by educators in the Pacific region.

### Procedures

The R&D Cadre members and their local support teams coordinated the survey administration. They planned meetings to inform school staff about the RAPSTA study, its purpose, rationale for the selection of schools, and the importance of serious responses to the survey. In these meetings, schedules for data collection were developed and confirmed. Plans for necessary logistical support and accommodations were also communicated to the staff.

Members of the local R&D Cadre visited the selected schools and gave surveys to the principals to distribute and administer. In addition, personnel who visited the RMI Ministry of Education offices were given surveys to complete. The data were collected from April 1997 to June 1997, giving adequate time for personnel to complete the surveys and time for PREL staff to follow up on the status of returned surveys. Completed surveys were collected by the local support team, and were then forwarded them to PREL in Honolulu for data entry and preliminary analysis.

## III. Findings

This section features general findings on absenteeism, attrition, and stress/burnout among teachers and school administrators in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. It highlights findings in three areas: (1) reasons for school absences, (2) possible reasons for attrition within the education profession, and (3) comparisons of Potential Leavers with Non-Leavers.

### Reasons for School Absences

During the 1996-1997 school year, teachers in the Republic of the Marshall Islands were away from work, on average, for a total of 18.13 days. School administrators were away from work, on average, for a total of 18.59 days. Table 3 provides reasons why teachers were away from work and frequency of absence. Table 4 provides reasons why school administrators were away from work and frequency of absence.

*Table 3*

**Reasons Why Teachers Are Away from School in the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

| Rank | Reason | Average # of Days Away |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Funerals | 2.86 |
| 2 | Personal illness | 2.47 |
| 3 | Training leave | 2.09 |
| 4 | Meetings and workshops | 2.00 |
| 5 | Educational leave | 1.58 |
| 6 | Family member sick | 1.07 |
| 7 | Vacation | 0.85 |
| 8 | Storm, heavy rain, flood, etc. | 0.65 |
| 9 | Church activities | 0.64 |
| 10 | Lack of instructional materials | 0.58 |
| 11 | Working conditions | 0.46 |
| 12 | Administrative leave | 0.41 |
| 12 | Maternity leave | 0.41 |
| 13 | Family responsibilities | 0.38 |
| 13 | Transportation problem | 0.38 |
| 14 | Stress | 0.34 |
| 15 | Child care | 0.28 |
| 16 | Birthdays | 0.26 |
| 17 | Community responsibilities | 0.24 |
| 18 | Relationship with supervisors | 0.09 |
| 19 | Other | 0.05 |
| 20 | Wedding | 0.04 |
| 21 | Jury duty | 0.00 |
| 21 | Military training | 0.00 |
| 21 | Paternity leave | 0.00 |
| 21 | Relationship with co-workers | 0.00 |
| 21 | Suspension | 0.00 |
| | TOTAL | 18.13 |

*Table 4*

**Reasons Why School Administrators Are Away from School in the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

| Rank | Reason | Average # of Days Away |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Educational leave | 7.82 |
| 2 | Meetings and workshops | 4.53 |
| 3 | Personal illness | 2.18 |
| 4 | Training leave | 1.71 |
| 5 | Storm, heavy rain, flood, etc. | 1.41 |
| 6 | Church activities | 0.35 |
| 7 | Family responsibilities | 0.29 |
| 8 | Family member sick | 0.18 |
| 9 | Administrative leave | 0.12 |
| 10 | Birthdays | 0.00 |
| 10 | Child care | 0.00 |
| 10 | Community responsibilities | 0.00 |
| 10 | Funerals | 0.00 |
| 10 | Jury duty | 0.00 |
| 10 | Lack of instructional materials | 0.00 |
| 10 | Maternity leave | 0.00 |
| 10 | Military training | 0.00 |
| 10 | Other | 0.00 |
| 10 | Paternity leave | 0.00 |
| 10 | Relationship with co-workers | 0.00 |
| 10 | Relationship with supervisors | 0.00 |
| 10 | Stress | 0.00 |
| 10 | Suspension | 0.00 |
| 10 | Transportation problem | 0.00 |
| 10 | Vacation | 0.00 |
| 10 | Wedding | 0.00 |
| 10 | Working conditions | 0.00 |
| | TOTAL | 18.59 |

In the Republic of the Marshall Islands, funerals were the leading cause of teacher absence from school, with an average of 2.86 days away. The next highest reason was personal illness, with an average of 2.47 days; followed by training leave, with an average of 2.09 days.

Republic of the Marshall Islands school administrators were most frequently away from school due to educational leave, with an average of 7.82 days absent. The next highest reasons were meetings and workshops, with an average of 4.53 days; and personal illness, with an average of 2.18 days.

## Reasons for Attrition in the Education Profession

Respondents rated 17 reasons for leaving teaching or administration on a four-point Likert-type scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." In order to judge the technical significance of correlations between responses on each item, this ordinal scale was collapsed into two categories: "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were counted as DISAGREE; "strongly agree" and "agree" were counted as AGREE. Percentage of agreement was then calculated for each reason.

In the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 27 percent (n=20) of the surveyed teachers agreed that they might leave teaching within the next two years. For purposes of analysis, two categories were created: Potential Leavers and Non-Leavers. Non-Leavers are those who disagreed with the statement, "I might leave teaching within the next two years." Table 5 ranks the reasons teachers gave for leaving teaching, comparing Potential Leavers with Non-Leavers.

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The top reason for leaving teaching—low salaries—is ranked first by teachers who are planning to leave as well as by those who are not. There are many other reasons why Potential Leavers might leave teaching and these reasons differentiate them from the Non-Leavers. (See rankings in Table 5). A statistical test ($Chi^2$) was performed to find out if the response patterns of Potential Leavers and Non-Leavers are different when looking at each possible reason for leaving teaching. However, no significant difference was found.

In the Republic of the Marshall Islands, 33.3 percent (n=6) of the surveyed school administrators agreed that they might leave educational administration within the next two years (Potential Leavers). Table 6 ranks the reasons school administrators gave for potentially leaving the school administration field, and compares Potential Leavers with Non-Leavers. Non-Leavers are those who disagreed with the statement, "I might leave educational administration altogether within the next two years."

There are many reasons why Potential Leavers might leave school administration and these reasons differentiate them from Non-Leavers (see rankings in Table 6). Following Cochran (1954), a statistical test (Fisher Exact Test) was performed to determine if the response patterns of Potential Leavers and Non-Leavers are different for each possible reason for leaving school administration. Results of the test indicated that Potential Leavers are more likely to leave because of too much stress and students' bad attitudes.

*Table 5*

**Reasons for Leaving Teaching in the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

| If I quit teaching, it would be because of ... | Potential Leavers | | Non-Leavers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % Agree | Rank | % Agree | Rank |
| poor working conditions | 57.9 | 7 | 69.6 | 2 |
| no support from school administration | 68.4 | 3 | 59.1 | 4 |
| no support from central office | 68.4 | 3 | 59.1 | 4 |
| too much stress | 66.7 | 4 | 42.9 | 8 |
| poor relationships with parents | 26.3 | 13 | 30.4 | 9 |
| students' bad attitudes | 36.8 | 10 | 13.6 | 12 |
| my lack of control over school policies | 31.6 | 12 | 9.1 | 13 |
| poor benefits | 64.7 | 5 | 54.5 | 6 |
| personal health problems | 63.2 | 6 | 63.6 | 3 |
| many disagreements about how to teach | 31.6 | 12 | 18.2 | 11 |
| ot enough school materials and supplies | 70.0 | 2 | 56.5 | 5 |
| low salaries | 90.0 | 1 | 73.9 | 1 |
| too many responsibilities | 21.1 | 14 | 13.6 | 12 |
| pressure from the community | 33.3 | 11 | 27.3 | 10 |
| retirement | 47.1 | 8 | 63.6 | 3 |
| promotion | 42.1 | 9 | 45.5 | 7 |
| poor relationship with other teachers | 16.7 | 15 | 18.2 | 11 |

*Table 6*

**Reasons for Leaving Administration in the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

| If I quit being a school administrator, it would be because of | Potential Leavers | | Non-Leavers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | % Agree | Rank | % Agree | Rank |
| poor working conditions | 75.0 | 3 | 87.5 | 1 |
| no support from school staff | 66.7 | 4 | 57.1 | 6 |
| no support from central office administration | 80.0 | 2 | 62.5 | 5 |
| too much stress * | 83.3 | 1 | 14.3 | 11 |
| poor relationships with parents | 75.0 | 3 | 25.0 | 10 |
| students' bad attitudes * | 83.3 | 1 | 25.0 | 10 |
| my lack of control over school policies | 60.0 | 5 | 33.3 | 9 |
| poor benefits | 50.0 | 6 | 66.7 | 4 |
| personal health problems | 80.0 | 2 | 75.0 | 3 |
| too many disagreements about how to run my school | 33.3 | 7 | 50.0 | 7 |
| not enough school materials and supplies | 83.3 | 1 | 57.1 | 6 |
| low salaries | 83.3 | 1 | 75.0 | 3 |
| too many responsibilities | 50.0 | 6 | 25.0 | 10 |
| pressure from the community | 83.3 | 1 | 50.0 | 7 |
| retirement | 83.3 | 1 | 77.8 | 2 |
| promotion | 66.7 | 4 | 37.5 | 8 |
| poor relationship with teachers | 50.0 | 6 | 12.5 | 12 |
| poor relationship with staff | 50.0 | 6 | 25.0 | 10 |
| political reasons | 66.7 | 4 | 62.5 | 5 |

* $p < .10$

### Comparison of Potential Leavers and Non-Leavers

The relationship between stress, burnout, and reported desire to leave the education field was examined in order to provide assistance to program managers and staff developers who work to improve school climate.

1. A *high degree of burnout* is reflected in high scores on the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization subscales, and in low scores on the Personal Accomplishment subscale.

2. A *medium degree of burnout* is reflected in moderate scores on the three subscales.

3. A *low degree of burnout* is reflected in low scores on the Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization subscales, and in high scores on the Personal Accomplishment subscale.

Table 7 reflects a comparison of mean scores for all teacher and school administrator respondents, with scores from the norm sample. Republic of the Marshall Islands teachers experience a lower sense of personal accomplishment than the norm sample. However, teachers and school administrators are less emotionally exhausted and feel less depersonalized than the norm sample.

School administrators exhibit higher scores regarding feelings of personal accomplishment than do teachers and those in the norm sample.

*Table 7*

**MBI Subscale Scores for Republic of the Marshall Islands Teachers and School Administrators Compared to the Norm Sample**

| MBI Subscale | Sample Size* | Mean Score |
|---|---|---|
| **Personal Accomplishment (PA)** | | |
| Republic of the Marshall Islands Teachers | 74 | 32.8 |
| Republic of the Marshall Islands School Administrators | 12 | 35.8 |
| Norm Sample | 4,163 | 33.5 |
| **Emotional Exhaustion (EE)** | | |
| Republic of the Marshall Islands Teachers | 74 | 20.2 |
| Republic of the Marshall Islands School Administrators | 12 | 17.8 |
| Norm Sample | 4,163 | 21.3 |
| **Depersonalization (DP)** | | |
| Republic of the Marshall Islands Teachers | 74 | 7.5 |
| Republic of the Marshall Islands School Administrators | 13 | 7.4 |
| Norm Sample | 4,163 | 11.0 |

*Sample sizes vary due to non-responses.

In order to analyze how Potential Leavers compare to Non-Leavers on the MBI subscales, scores were classified into High, Moderate, and Low categories. To make interpretation easier, the suggested cut-off scores used by MBI authors to classify low and high Personal Accomplishment were reversed. That is, a high score in this report means a high sense of personal accomplishment. According to the authors (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996), personal accomplishment is a reverse scale, which means high scores denote a high *lack* of personal accomplishment. We found this to be confusing and, thus, made these changes for our reporting purposes. The following cut-off scores were used:

*Table 8*

**Cut-off Scores for MBI Subscale Categories**

| MBI Subscale | High | Moderate | Low |
|---|---|---|---|
| Personal Accomplishment | ≥ 37 | 31-36 | ≤ 30 |
| Emotional Exhaustion | ≥ 27 | 17-26 | ≤ 16 |
| Depersonalization | ≥ 14 | 9-13 | ≤ 8 |

Figures 1-6 display differences between Potential Leavers and Non-Leavers among teachers (Figures 1-3) and school administrators (Figures 4-6) on the three MBI subscales. Republic of the Marshall Islands teachers who might leave have a higher sense of personal accomplishment; however, they feel more emotionally exhausted and more depersonalized than Non-Leavers. On the other hand, school administrators who might leave show lower levels of personal accomplishment, are more emotionally exhausted, and feel more depersonalized than their non-leaving peÂrs.

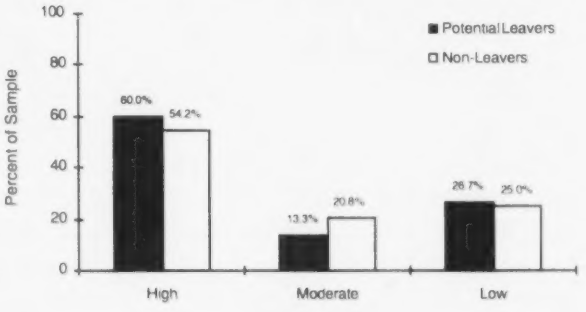


*Figure 1.* **Personal accomplishment among teachers in the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

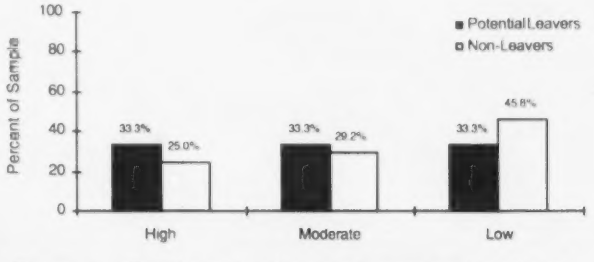


*Figure 2.* **Emotional exhaustion among teachers in the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

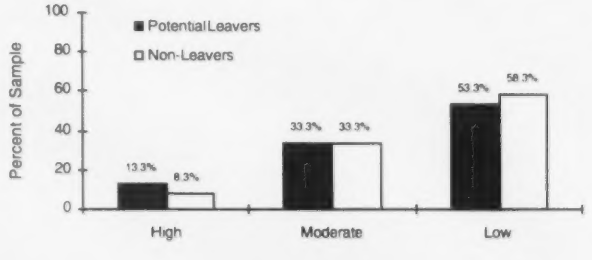


*Figure 3.* **Depersonalization among teachers in the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

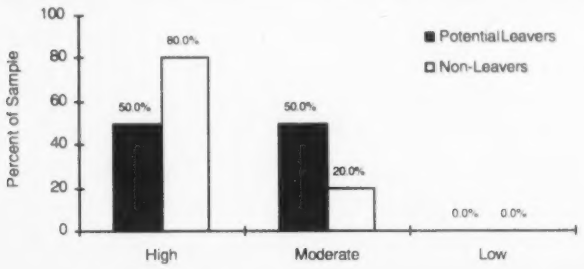


*Figure 4.* **Personal accomplishment among school administrators in the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

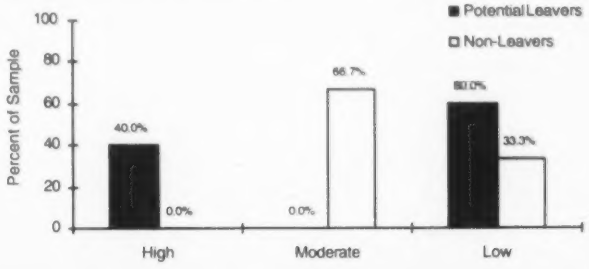


*Figure 5.* **Emotional exhaustion among school administrators in the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

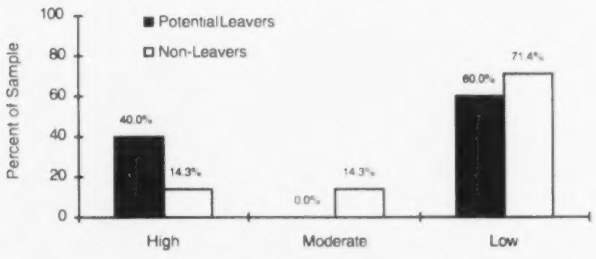


*Figure 6.* **Depersonalization among school administrators in the Republic of the Marshall Islands**

## IV. Discussion

### Absenteeism

Absenteeism among teachers and school administrators in the Republic of the Marshall Islands appears to be a problem. For example, teachers are away from work an average of 18.13 days. School administrators are away from work an average of 18.59 days. These numbers are among the highest across all of PREL's entities in the Pacific region.

Teacher absences are due primarily to funerals, personal illness, and training leave—reasons that tend to be of immediate concern to teachers (Scott & Wimbush, 1991). The number of days absent due to funerals (2.86) is also the highest reported by any entity. Funerals are culturally sanctioned occasions that often require participation in events that take place during school hours.

School administrator absences are most often due to educational leave, averaging 7.82 days away; meetings and workshops, 4.53 days; and personal illness, 2.18 days. Professional obligations are not under the direct control of school administrators but require their participation.

### Attrition

Twenty-seven percent of teachers agreed with the statement, "I plan to leave teaching within the next two years." The top reason selected for leaving was low salaries, ranked number one by teachers who were planning to leave as well as by those who were not. Potential Leavers are more likely to leave for the following reasons: not enough school materials and supplies, no support from school administration, no support from central office, and too much stress. Because of difficulties accessing remote

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islands, central office responses to requests for supplies and materials can be delayed, thus causing frustration. The majority of teachers are under the age of 50, with less than 15 years of experience. Therefore, leaving the profession can seem viable as an option. Low salaries have been a problem for several years. Teachers often leave RMI in order to teach in places that offer higher salaries—such as Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands—or they leave teaching altogether for a higher-paying position in another field.

Among school administrators, Potential Leavers ranked too much stress, students' bad attitudes, not enough school materials and supplies, low salaries, pressure from the community, and retirement as the primary reasons for leaving the public school system. Most of the Republic of the Marshall Islands school administrators in this study are over the age of 45 and have more than 20 years of experience; they are closely approaching retirement both in age and years of service.

### Burnout

Approximately 27 percent of Republic of the Marshall Islands teachers might leave within the next two years; they report a higher sense of personal accomplishment, but more emotional exhaustion and more depersonalization at work. Teachers who might leave teaching in the Republic of the Marshall Islands appear to experience some aspects of occupational burnout.

Thirty-three percent of the Republic of the Marshall Islands school administrators might leave within the next two years; they experience a lower sense of personal accomplishment, are more emotionally exhausted, and feel more depersonalized than their non-leaving peers. School administrators who might leave also appear to experience aspects of occupational burnout.

The common reasons given for leaving teaching or school administration are lack of support (either from school administration or central office) and low salaries. Teachers also cited too much stress, and school administrators mentioned retirement as a top reason for leaving. Even though teachers might feel that they are putting forth their best efforts, low salaries and lack of support cause frustration and resentment.

## V. Limitations

### The Challenge of Language and Culture

Conducting research across diverse linguistic and cultural groups is a challenging task. The language in which research is conducted can limit accurate interpretation of results. Expectations regarding task importance and response candor may vary from culture to culture. Thus, results from cross-cultural studies may be difficult to interpret.

While English is the language of wider communication in all of the American-affiliated Pacific entities, respondents to the surveys in this study varied in Ùheir use and comprehension of English. For some, English might be a first language; for others, it might be a second or third language, used to a much lesser extent than the vernacular. Thus, particular vocabulary, grammatical structures, or instructions may have been problematic.

To adjust for some for these potential errors in measurement, native language/culture informants, who are members of the R&D Cadre or entity local support teams, provided the following expert assistance:

- developed and piloted questions used in the survey;
- revised potentially confusing items from the Maslach instrument;
- in many cases, administered surveys in group settings, leading respondents through each item, and clarifying meanings upon request; and
- provided translations, where necessary, especially in geographically isolated outer-island settings.

Culture-specific interpretations concerning the importance of research, ways of responding, and the meanings of specific terms might all affect results. R&D Cadre members made special efforts to work with their respective departments or ministries of education and directors to ensure that teachers and school administrators took their responses to the survey seriously. In many cases, entity-wide meetings were held to explain the study, its importance, and the need for truthful data. Because the study was designed by members of each department of education, and was intended to investigate issues of importance to the entity, some support was ensured. The study was discussed at principals' and teachers' meetings; support for administration and data collection was provided by the entity department or ministry of education.

### Instrumentation

All data collected in this study came from self-report questionnaires. This method of data collection was selected because of its perceived advantages for large-scale research. Those advantages include:

- Questionnaires are relatively easy and inexpensive to administer
- Questionnaires can be designed to ensure anonymity
- Respondents answer at their own pace
- Questions are standardized

However, self-report questionnaires also have limitations—responses may not always be truthful or accurate. Some respondents might make careless errors, such as checking the wrong box or writing the incorrect number. They might purposely answer questions with incorrect information because they want to give a favorable impression or avoid potentially embarrassing admissions. Or, they might misinterpret questions and respond inaccurately.

The R&D Cadre pilot-tested the questionnaires in order to improve wording so that respondents might better interpret the meanings of questions. Additionally, directions for completing the questionnaires and administration procedures were purposefully designed to ensure anonymity. However, even with these precautions, hindsight tells us that specific changes might have improved the validity of responses. In particular, the following limitations are noted:

1. Items that required respondents to check boxes on the right were somewhat confusing. The items should have been transposed so that the boxes were on the left.

2. Questions measuring attrition could have been phrased with greater clarity. Rather than asking if the respondents *might* leave and reasons that *might* cause them to leave, perhaps asking whether or not they were *going to* leave and *why* would have provided more definitive information.

3. In order to assure respondents of anonymity and foster truthfulness in responses, surveys did not ask for individuals' names. However, they did request the names of schools. In entities where there are few schools and a limited number of teachers (e.g., one per grade level), this may not have been sufficient to guarantee anonymity, and, consequently, honesty in response.

### Sampling

The unique relationship between the RMI Department of Education and the local, privately-run school districts presented challenges for survey distribution and collection. In order not to interfere with the local school administration, the data were collected after school let out for the summer. Consequently, convenience samples of teachers and school administrators were used.

Most educators are no longer at their school site during the summer months. However, many of the teachers sampled were those participating in a school-wide summer project at Ebeye School on Kwajalein Atoll. These teachers were accessible and willing to participate. Additional teachers and school administrators who participated were those who visited the state office during the summer (usually those on-island who came by to pick up their paychecks) and volunteered to complete surveys.

Convenience sampling raises issues of representativeness, and consequently, generalizability of

results. Because most teachers sampled in this study are from the more populated islands—the sample represents all teachers on Majuro and Kwajalein—the results can at least be generalized to these central locales. For example, given that most teachers from remote schools were not included in the sample, the number of days teachers report being away may be an under (or over) representation for teachers across the RMI.

### Analysis

Non-responses to items on the questionnaires could limit the validity of some results. For example, in order to analyze differences between teachers who are Potential Leavers and Non-Leavers, only those who responded to the question "I might leave teaching within the next two years" and each of the reasons for leaving could be included in the analyses (cross-tabulations). In some instances, large portions of the sample did not respond to either the "I might leave" question or one of the reasons.

Therefore, conclusions based on such results may only be generalized on the basis of those who were willing to respond. There may be systematic differences between respondents and non-respondents. For example, if non-respondents were more likely to experience depersonalization at work and, therefore, did not care to respond to all items, then conclusions based on results in which they did not participate would under-identify this risk factor in the population.

Although standardized group administration practices included requests to respond to all items, these requests were not sufficient. Moreover, standardized administration was not always possible.

Non-responses on the Maslach Burnout Inventory were also a problem. In order to calculate each subscale score, all items that contributed to that subscale must have been answered. If a respondent left one item out, the subscale in which that item was included could not be computed. Therefore, the extent of burnout may be underrepresented.

## VI. Recommendations

The recommendations provided in this section of the report are based on the general findings concerned with absenteeism, attrition, and stress/burnout among teachers and school administrators in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Findings in three areas are highlighted: (1) reasons for absences, (2) possible reasons for attrition in the education profession, and (3) comparisons of Potential Leavers and Non-Leavers.

### Recommendations Regarding Findings on Absenteeism

Absenteeism among teachers and school administrators in the Republic of the Marshall Islands appears to be a problem. Teachers are away from work, on average, a total of 18.13 days. School administrators are away from work, on average, a total of 18.59 days. These numbers are among the highest in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific. Although reasons for some absences might be valid, the very high rates of absenteeism for both teachers and school administrators are problematic. The difficulties associated with these high rates of absenteeism are compounded by the fact that no substitute teachers or administrators are available in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

It is therefore recommended that Republic of the Marshall Islands educators seriously consider the need to improve their school attendance. Existing attendance policies should be reviewed for appropriate action. In the absence of current attendance policies, written policies should be developed and consistently implemented through an appropriate accountability system that includes sanctions and rewards. For children to make academic progress, they need guidance and leadership from their teachers and school administrators; these educators provide necessary and important instruction, both verbally and by example.

### Recommendations Regarding Findings on Attrition

In the Republic of the Marshall Islands, there are numerous reasons for teachers to leave the teaching field: low salaries, no support from school administration or central office, and too much stress. For

school administrators, Potential Leavers are more likely to leave because of too much stress and students' bad attitudes.

To contribute to staff stability, a pro-active program aimed at reducing the attrition rate of teachers and school administrators should be designed and implemented by the public school system. Staff stability, in turn, might contribute to better student performance and achievement.

### Recommendations Regarding Findings on Stress/Burnout

In the Republic of the Marshall Islands, teachers who might leave within the next two years reported more emotional exhaustion and depersonalization at work. School administrators who might leave reportedly experience a lower sense of personal accomplishment, are more emotionally exhausted, and have more feelings of depersonalization than their non-leaving peers. These findings indicate some aspects of occupational burnout; therefore, it is recommended that the Republic of the Marshall Islands Ministry of Education design and implement a comprehensive program to reduce stress and burnout among educators. Such a program could contribute to improved attendance and well-being of those who work most closely with students.

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## Appendices

**Appendix A:** RAPSTA Teacher Questionnaire

**Appendix B:** RAPSTA School Administrator Questionnaire

**Appendix A**

# Retention and Attrition of Pacific School Teachers and Administrators (RAPSTA) Study

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# Teacher Questionnaire

Created by the

**Research and Development Cadre**

American Samoa Department of Education
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Public School System
Federated States of Micronesia National Department of Education
Guam Department of Education
Chuuk State Department of Education
Hawai'i State Department of Education
Kosrae State Department of Education
Pohnpei State Department of Education
Yap State Department of Education
Republic of the Marshall Islands Ministry of Education
Republic of Palau Ministry of Education
with the assistance of
Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

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April 1997

**Retention and Attrition of Pacific School Teachers and Administrators (RAPSTA) Study**
**Teacher Questionnaire**

## SECTION 1

**The purpose of this section is to understand what factors cause teachers to be away from school. All responses will be kept anonymous. Please complete this section by filling in the requested information. Please print your responses and check (✓) boxes (☐) as appropriate. Remember, DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. It is important that all responses be anonymous.**

**School**: _____ **Date**: _____

**Location**: Am. Samoa ☐ Guam ☐ CNMI ☐ Hawaii ☐ RMI ☐
Pohnpei ☐ Chuuk ☐ Kosrae ☐ Yap ☐ Palau ☐

**Gender:** M ☐ F ☐ **Place of birth:** _____
(Entity or State or Country)

**Ethnic heritage:** _____
(Ethnicity of Parents)

**Age:**
15-19 ☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-29 ☐ 30-34 ☐ 35-39 ☐ 40-44 ☐
45-49 ☐ 50-54 ☐ 55-59 ☐ 60-64 ☐ 65 + ☐

**Current marital status:**
Never Married ☐ Married ☐ Separated ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐

**Highest level of education attained:**
High School Graduate ☐ Associate Degree ☐ Bachelor Degree ☐
Master Degree ☐ Other (specify) ☐

**Major field of study:** _____
(Examples: Elementary Education, Math, Science, Agriculture, etc.)

**Current annual salary:** $_____(per year)

**Years of teaching experience:**
1 - 4 ☐ 5 - 10 ☐ 11 - 14 ☐ 15 - 20 ☐ 21 or more ☐

**What grades do you currently teach?** (check all that apply) —
**How many students do you teach?** (put in number per grade level) —

| K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**For elementary teachers who teach in self-contained settings, please check the subject areas you are currently teaching.**

| ✔ | **Subject areas you teach (put a ✔ in column on left)** | ✔ | **Subject areas you teach (put a ✔ in column on left)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Language Arts/English | | Art |
| | Language Arts/Vernacular | | Music |
| | Math | | Health |
| | Science | | Physical Education |
| | Social Studies | | Guidance |
| | Other (specify) | | Other (specify) |

**For secondary teachers who teach in departmentalized settings, please check the subject area(s) and number of class periods you are currently teaching.**

| | **Number of class periods you teach (put a ✔ in the appropriate columns)** | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Subject area(s) you teach** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Language Arts/English | | | | | | | |
| Language Arts/Vernacular | | | | | | | |
| Math | | | | | | | |
| Science | | | | | | | |
| Social Studies | | | | | | | |
| Vocational Education (specify) | | | | | | | |
| Business Education | | | | | | | |
| Computers | | | | | | | |
| Art | | | | | | | |
| Music | | | | | | | |
| Physical Education | | | | | | | |
| Other (specify) | | | | | | | |

**If you have had jobs other than teaching, please list them below.**

| Previous employment other than teaching | Number of years |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |

**Total number of instructional days you were away from school this year (SY '96 - '97):**

None ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 20 + ☐

**Write the number of days you were away from school in SY '96 -'97 for the reasons listed below.**

| Reason | Number of Days | Reason | Number of Days |
|---|---|---|---|
| funerals | | working conditions | |
| birthdays | | relationship with co-workers | |
| child care | | stress | |
| transportation problem | | meetings and workshops | |
| personal illness | | administrative leave | |
| family member sick | | educational leave | |
| family responsibilities (errands) | | training leave | |
| community responsibilities | | church activities | |
| storm, heavy rain or flood | | maternity leave | |
| vacation | | paternity leave | |
| lack of instructional materials | | suspension | |
| relationship with supervisor | | jury duty | |
| wedding | | military training | |
| other (specify) | | other (specify) | |

SECTION 2

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## SECTION 3

**The purpose of this section is to understand what makes teachers leave their jobs. Below are listed statements made about quitting a teaching job. Place a check (✔) in the column next to each statement that best reflects how much *you agree or disagree* with the statement. Please respond to all statements.**

**MAKE ONE ✔ MARK ON EACH LINE.**

| Statement | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I might leave my current teaching job for a better teaching position within the next two years. | | | | |
| I might leave teaching all together within the next two years. | | | | |
| **If I quit teaching, it would be because of . . .** | | | | |
| poor working conditions. | | | | |
| no support from school administration. | | | | |
| no support from central office administration. | | | | |
| too much stress. | | | | |
| poor relationships with parents. | | | | |
| students' bad attitudes. | | | | |
| my lack of control over school policies. | | | | |
| poor benefits (health insurance, retirement, etc.). | | | | |
| personal health problems. | | | | |
| too many disagreements about how to teach. | | | | |
| not enough school materials and supplies. | | | | |
| low salaries. | | | | |
| too many responsibilities. | | | | |
| pressure from the community. | | | | |
| retirement. | | | | |
| promotion. | | | | |
| poor relationship with other teachers. | | | | |

*Thank you for your assistance. Please return this questionnaire to the large envelope which has been placed on one of the desks in the room.*

**Appendix B**

Retention and Attrition of
Pacific School Teachers and Administrators
(RAPSTA) Study

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# School Administrator Questionnaire

Created by the

**Research and Development Cadre**

American Samoa Department of Education
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Public School System
Federated States of Micronesia National Department of Education
Guam Department of Education
Chuuk State Department of Education
Hawai'i State Department of Education
Kosrae State Department of Education
Pohnpei State Department of Education
Yap State Department of Education
Republic of the Marshall Islands Ministry of Education
Republic of Palau Ministry of Education
with the assistance of
Pacific Resources for Education and Learning

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PREL

April 1997

**Retention and Attrition of Pacific School Teachers and Administrators (RAPSTA) Study**
**School Administrator Questionnaire**

## SECTION 1

**The purpose of this section is to understand what factors cause school administrators to be away from school. All responses will be kept anonymous. Please complete this section by filling in the requested information. Please print your responses and check (✔) boxes (☐) as appropriate. Remember, DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONAIRE. It is important that all responses be anonymous.**

**Date:** _____

**Location:** Am. Samoa ☐ Guam ☐ CNMI ☐ Hawaii ☐ RMI ☐
Pohnpei ☐ Chuuk ☐ Kosrae ☐ Yap ☐ Palau ☐

**Gender:** M ☐ F ☐ **Place of birth:** _____
(Entity or State or Country)

**Ethnic heritage:** _____
(Ethnicity of Parents)

**Age:**
15-19 ☐ 20-24 ☐ 25-29 ☐ 30-34 ☐ 35-39 ☐ 40-44 ☐
45-49 ☐ 50-54 ☐ 55-59 ☐ 60-64 ☐ 65 + ☐

**Current marital status:**
Never Married ☐ Married ☐ Separated ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐

**Highest level of education attained:**
High School Graduate ☐ Associate Degree ☐ Bachelor Degree ☐
Master Degree ☐ Other (specify) ☐

**Major field(s) of study:** _____
(Examples: School Administration, Curriculum & Instruction, Elementary Education, Math, etc.)

**Current annual salary:** $_____(per year)

**Total school enrollment:** _____

**Students enrolled by grade:**
What is the student enrollment at your school by grade?

| K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Your current position:**
principal ☐ vice-principal ☐ head teacher ☐
teaching principal ☐ teaching vice-principal ☐

**In the space below, please describe your training in school administration.**

**Please indicate the number of years of teaching and administrative experience you have had.**

| | Number of years by level | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Elem./Int. (K-8)** | **High Sch. (9-12)** | **College** |
| teacher | | | |
| head teacher | | | |
| teaching department head | | | |
| teaching vice-principal | | | |
| vice-principal | | | |
| teaching principal | | | |
| principal | | | |

**If you are a teaching principal/teaching vice-principal, please check the subject area(s) and number of class periods you are currently teaching.**

| | Number of class periods you teach (put a ✔ in the appropriate columns) | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Subject area(s) you teach** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Language Arts/English | | | | | | | |
| Language Arts/Vernacular | | | | | | | |
| Math | | | | | | | |
| Science | | | | | | | |
| Social Studies | | | | | | | |
| Vocational Education (specify) | | | | | | | |
| Business Education | | | | | | | |
| Computers | | | | | | | |
| Art | | | | | | | |
| Music | | | | | | | |
| Physical Education | | | | | | | |
| Other (specify) | | | | | | | |

**If you have had jobs other than teaching and/or school administration, please list them below.**

| Previous employment other than teaching or school administration | Number of years |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |

**Total number of days you were away from school in SY '96 -'97:**

None ☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 20 + ☐

**Write the number of days you were away from school in SY '96 -'97 for the reasons listed below.**

| Reason | Number of Days | Reason | Number of Days |
|---|---|---|---|
| funerals | | working conditions | |
| birthdays | | relationship with co-workers | |
| child care | | stress | |
| transportation problem | | meetings and workshops | |
| personal illness | | administrative leave | |
| family member sick | | educational leave | |
| family responsibilities (errands) | | training leave | |
| community responsibilities | | church activities | |
| storm, heavy rain or flood | | maternity leave | |
| vacation | | paternity leave | |
| lack of instructional materials | | suspension | |
| relationship with supervisor | | jury duty | |
| wedding | | military training | |
| other (specify) | | other (specify) | |

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## SECTION 3

**The purpose of this section is to understand what makes school administrators leave their jobs. Below are listed statements made about quitting a school administrator's job. Place a check (✔) in the column next to each statement that best reflects how much *you agree or disagree* with the statement.**

**MAKE ONE ✔ MARK ON EACH LINE.**

| Statement | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I might leave my current school administrator position for a better school administrator position within the next two years. | | | | |
| I might leave my current school administrator position for a better central office administrator position within the next two years. | | | | |
| I might leave educational administration all together within the next two years. | | | | |
| **If I quit being a school administrator, it would be because of . . .** | | | | |
| poor working conditions. | | | | |
| no support from school staff. | | | | |
| no support from central office administration. | | | | |
| too much stress. | | | | |
| poor relationships with parents. | | | | |
| students' bad attitudes. | | | | |
| my lack of control over school policies. | | | | |
| poor benefits (health insurance, retirement, etc.). | | | | |
| personal health problems. | | | | |
| too many disagreements about how to run my school. | | | | |
| not enough school materials and supplies. | | | | |
| low salaries. | | | | |
| too many responsibilities. | | | | |
| pressure from the community. | | | | |
| retirement. | | | | |
| promotion. | | | | |
| poor relationship with teachers. | | | | |
| poor relationship with staff. | | | | |
| political reasons. | | | | |

*Thank you for your assistance. Please return this questionnaire to the large envelope which has been placed on one of the desks in the room.*



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